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ABSTRACT

Presented is a booklet for teenagers about life planning. It discusses hopes and dreams that adolescents may have and gives tips for reaching goals. A sentence completion exercise is included to help readers set goals. Four important goals for teenagers are presented and discussed: (1) graduating from high school; (2) waiting to have a baby; (3) getting a job at the present time; and (4) planning a job for the future. The section on delaying parenthood discusses sexual behavior of teenagers, abstinence, and birth control. The section on getting a job as a teenager presents tips for job hunting and interviewing tips. The booklet concludes with a sentence completion exercise which helps readers to focus on their own life plan. (NB)

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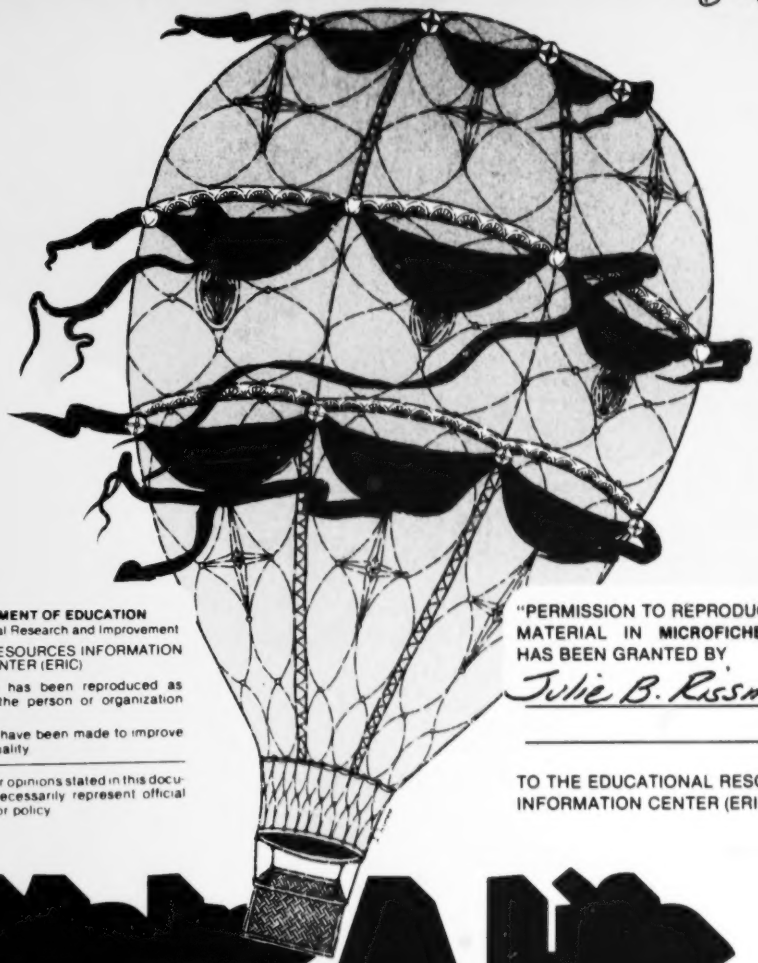

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Make A Life for Yourself

A Booklet For Teens About Life Planning

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Introduction

Remember when you were little and adults used to ask "what do you want to be when you grow up?" You answered "a sports star" or "an astronaut" or "a movie star". Anything and everything was possible then.

Now you are almost an adult, and it's time to start making real plans for your future. We all have hopes and dreams about . . .

- **Our future husbands or wives**
- **Our future families**
- **Our future jobs and careers**
- **Our future homes**

Everyone wants their dreams to come true. But it doesn't just happen. It takes planning. And now is the time to start your own Life Planning.

Life Planning means thinking about your future . . . deciding what you want to do . . . making good choices. It means thinking about school . . . jobs . . . a career.

Life planning means waiting to have a child until you are ready. Becoming a parent while you are a teenager is a sure way of changing your plans and hopes.

This booklet will help you with your Life Plan. It talks about the most important parts of a Life Plan — decisions about sex and parenthood, and decisions about jobs.

Your Hopes and Dreams

When you shut your eyes and picture yourself in five years, what do you see? Are you single? Married? Where do you live? What type of work do you do? Do you have children?

The things you see for yourself in the future are called goals. And setting goals for yourself and trying to reach them is an important part of Life Planning.

You set goals for yourself all the time. You may have wanted to make the basketball team . . . get better grades . . . buy a new dress . . . save money for a trip . . . learn to breakdance. These are all goals.

You can set goals for your future. You might want to get a job . . . go on to school . . . get married . . . live in a new place.

Tips For Making Your Goals Come True:

- **Break your goal into small pieces.** Decide to lose a pound a week instead of ten pounds at once.
- **Know what you want to reach.** Don't say, "I want to save money." Say, "I want to save $100."
- **Set a time limit.** When do you want to reach your goal? Next week? Next year? When you're 50?
- **Be positive.** Say, "I'm going to get at least a B in every course."

Finishing these sentences may help you set goals.

In six months, I'd like to have enough money to

What I want to change most about myself now is

One thing I'd really like to try this month is

In school, I'd like to

When I have children I'd like to be

Maybe in ten years I'd like to have

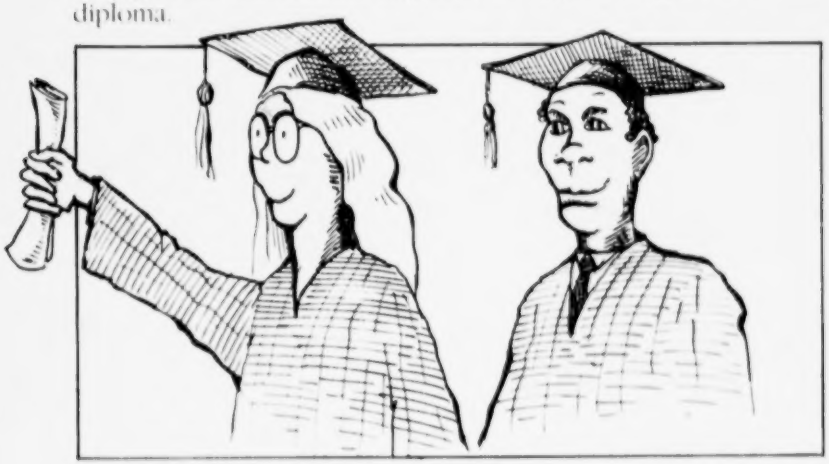
The job I'd like to have in ten years is

Teenagers can have many goals for their lives. Three important goals for teens are:

- getting a high school diploma
- waiting to have a child until later
- getting a job

My First Goal:
A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Did you know that one out of four teens never finish high school? And that a pregnancy is one of the reasons that both girls and guys drop-out? Graduating from high school is a goal all teenagers can have. Almost all good jobs require a high school diploma.



What if you've already left school? Well, if you're under age 18, you can probably go back. Call the closest high school and ask to speak to a guidance counselor or a principal's office. Tell them your story and ask for their help. Or, ask an older friend or parent for help.

If you're over 16, you can still get a high school diploma by studying for your Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED). A GED says you have the same skills as a high school graduate. To find out about getting a GED, contact a high school, public library, or job training center.

Whether or not you are in high school now, you should set goals for when you get your diploma. After high school, you can:

- Go to school: trade school, business school, college
- Get a job
- Join the military
- Get married
- Get other training

Which ones do you think you will do?

My Second Goal: WAIT TO HAVE A BABY

Did you know:

- most teenage parents drop out of school?
- teen moms and their babies can have serious health problems?
- teen fathers can be forced to support their children until they are adults?
- teens who marry because the girl is pregnant are more likely to divorce?

Think for a minute. Imagine that you became a parent this year. Could you have gone to school? Who would be taking care of the baby? Where would you be getting the money? How would your parents feel? Your friends? What would have happened to your plans?

Ask yourself, "How old do I really want to be before I raise a child?" Make a list of the things you want to do or have before you become a parent. This list might include finishing high school, getting a job, getting married, saving money, or traveling to some place new.

Should I Or Shouldn't I?

One of the most difficult choices you may have to make as a teenager is whether or not to have sex (sexual intercourse). Your friends say one thing — your parents say another — TV and movies say something else. Who's right?

Not everyone is having sex! In fact, half of the boys and two-thirds of the girls in U.S. high schools are virgins.

Abstinence (saying "no") is the best form of birth control for teens. It's safe, free, always with you, and you don't have to worry that your parents will find out. Like any birth control method, you have to use it every time!

Ten Good Reasons to Wait to Have Sex:

- You don't want to
- You're not ready
- You don't want to be pregnant or get someone pregnant
- You don't want to get a sexually transmitted disease (STD)
- Your religion says it's wrong
- You want to wait until you're in love or married
- It would upset your parents
- Your reputation might be hurt
- Your boyfriend or girlfriend isn't ready
- You're not using birth control

Ten Bad Reasons to Have Sex Now:

- Everyone is "doing it"
- Your boyfriend or girlfriend is pushing you
- Your friends are pushing you
- To be grown up
- To find out what it's like
- To hold on to a relationship
- To make your parents mad
- To stop feeling lonely
- To be popular
- To hurt someone or get back at them

If You *Do* Decide to Have Sex, You Have More Decisions to Make.

- Are you ready to be a parent?

If you're not — and most teens aren't —

- Which method of contraception will you use?

The only way to be sure that pregnancy can't occur is to use a birth control method every time you have sex. Every time!

Here's a quiz about birth control:

True	False	
☐	☐	1. You can't get pregnant the first time you have sex.
☐	☐	2. You have to have your parents' permission to get birth control at a clinic.
☐	☐	3. The pill causes cancer.
☐	☐	4. A girl can't get pregnant if she has sex during her period.
☐	☐	5. You have to be 18 to buy condoms.

The answer to all of these is "False". If you answered "True" you need to find out more. If you are having sex, you need to get birth control. Clinics can provide low cost care and you don't need anyone's permission to use them. Look in the Yellow Pages under "clinics", "birth control" or "counseling".

Do you know about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)? These used to be called V.D. — STDs are diseases that are spread by having sex with another person.

To help protect yourself against getting an STD, you can:

- Not have sex.
- Only have sex with one person.
- Use a condom every time you have sex.

If you think you have an STD, call your health department, clinic, or doctor. And don't have sex again until you are checked out.

My Third Goal:
GETTING A JOB NOW!

Many teenagers have jobs after school, on weekends, or during the summer. These jobs are a good way to make money, learn a skill, and find out what you like (and don't like) at work.

But how do you find a job?

Tips for Job Hunting

- Read the want ads, especially on Sunday.
- Look for signs in stores and restaurants and hotels.
- Ask adults you know if there are jobs open where they work.
- Talk to a guidance counselor or someone at a job training center.

When you go to apply for a job, bring with you:

- Your social security number, address, and date of birth.
- The names of *all* your schools, and the dates you went to them.
- A list of all the places you've worked and school activities.
- The names, addresses, and phone numbers of three people (not your relatives) who have known you for at least a year, and could tell an employer about you.

You may need an interview to get a job. The interview is a chance for the employer to find out if you are mature, responsible, and willing to work hard. This may be your ***only*** chance to talk about this job, so it is very important that it go well.

Remember: it is up to you to make the best impression.

Interviewing tips:

- Dress neatly; don't chew gum or smoke.
- Answer questions directly and politely.
- Remain alert, don't slouch, show that you are interested.
- Don't use slang or street language.

Practice an interview with a friend. Here are some questions you might be asked:

- Why do you want this job?
- Tell me about your past work.
- What do you like best about school?
- What are your plans for the future?

My Fourth Goal:
PLANNING A JOB FOR MY FUTURE

Life Planning is preparing for the type of job you want in the future. Parenthood is one job that many people choose, but most men and women also work outside the home.

Start thinking about what type of work you might want to do later. Classes you take now may help. After school jobs may give you ideas for future work.

Ask yourself some more questions:

Do you want to go to school after high school? Many jobs require a college degree. But many good jobs, such as food service and plumbing and data entry, require a high school diploma and special training. Most areas have vocational education programs in high schools that prepare students for skilled jobs. Ask your guidance counselor or local job training center.

What do you like? Do you like working with people? You could be a social worker or a store clerk or a teacher. Do you like numbers? You could go into banking or bookkeeping or physics. Do you like working with your hands? You might be an electrician or a construction worker or an artist.

What are you good at? Do you write well? You might be a reporter or an editor or an executive. Do you think fast on your feet? You might be a lawyer or a salesperson or a teacher.

Are you good at sports? You might be an athlete or a coach or an owner of a sporting goods store.

What's most important to you about a job? Is it how much money you can make? Is it helping others to lead better lives? Is it being famous?

How can you choose? First, talk to some people who have those jobs. Ask your family, your guidance counselor, teacher, or other adult about your skills and what jobs might match them. Ask if there are local job fairs or placement agencies for young people. Try to work or volunteer for places that interest you.

Dream a little. See yourself in ten years leaving the house to go to work. What might you be wearing? How many hours would you be working? Would you be working at a desk or in a store or outdoors?

Try not to limit yourself to certain jobs just because you think they are for men or women only.

Today, women can be . . .

- carpenters
- welders
- bus drivers
- business executives
- athletes.

Men can be . . .

- bank tellers
- secretaries
- nurses
- homemakers
- flight attendants.

The sky's the limit when it comes to the number of things you can be, no matter whether you're a man or a woman.

My Life Plan

Now that you've read this booklet, think about your own Life Plan. Begin with these questions.

When I graduate from high school, I want to:

The type of job I want to have when I get older is:

In order to prepare for this job, I will have to:

- get a high school diploma.
-
-
-

How do I want to be when I become a parent?

So I don't have a pregnancy as a teenager, I need to:
(check one)

- ☐
- ☐

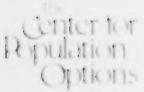
Places To Help You

For Questions About Sex and Birth Control:

Your Parents and Family Members
Your Church or Synagogue
Local Planned Parenthood, Health Department or Family Planning Clinic
School Nurse
Your Doctor
Your Health Teacher

For Questions About Jobs and Careers:

Your Parents and Family Members
Your Teachers and Guidance Counselor
Job Corps Center or other job training center
Vocational School
Employment Services
Library
Summer Youth Employment Program



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